

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01634 241519Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 /026 W
-----120884 241531Z /43
R 231406Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7339
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1634

STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR NEA/ARN DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SY, US
SUBJ: SYRIAN JEWRY: IRANIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS

REF: DAMASCUS 924

1. SHALOM AND DCM CALLED ON IRANIAN AMBASSADOR POURSAARTIP MARCH 13 TO DISCUSS PROGRESS IN THE HIAS-IRANIAN PROJECT. POURSAARTIP SAID THAT SINCE HIS FEB. 14 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR (REFTEL), HE HAD DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH A PROMINENT SYRIAN JEW HOLDING AN IRANIAN PASSPORT WHO HAD OPINED THAT THERE WERE NO IRANIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS INTERESTED IN LEAVING SYRIA AT THE PRESENT TIME. POURSAARTIP SAID HE WOULD BE TALKING TO ANOTHER FAMILY HEAD ON THE SAME SUBJECT IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. IT BACAME CLEAR DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION THAT POURSAARTIP WOULD BE UNWILLING TO INTERVENE WITH SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ON CASES INVOLVING DEPARTURE OF ENTIRE FAMILIES. SINCE SYRIA WAS IN STATE OF WAR WITH ISRAEL, HE EXPLAINED TO SHALOM, IT IS UNEREASONABLE TO EXPECT SARG TO ALLOW JEWISH MALES TO LEAVE. ON THE OTHER
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HAND, POURSAARTIP EXPRESSED FULL WILLINGNESS TO HELP ARRANGE DEPARTURES OF UNMARRIED SYRIAN JEWISH WOMEN WISHING TO GO ABROAD TO FIND HUSBANDS, IF THERE WERE ANY SUCH WOMEN TO BE FOUND AMONG HOLDERS OF IRANIAN PASSPORTS.

3. WITH SOME RELUCTANCE POURSAARTIP AGREED TO RECEIVE

SHALOM AGAIN MARCH 15 ACCOMPANIED BY TOUTAH AND RABBI HAMRA. HE MADE CLEAR HE WOULD RECEIVE THEM ONLY ON CONDITION THAT THEY WERE COMING TO DELIVER TO HIM THE COMMUNITY'S LIST OF IRANIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS AND NOT FOR ANY MORE GENERAL PURPOSE. WE HAVE NO DETAILED READOUT OF THIS MEETING EXCEPT THAT TOUTAH SAID IT WAS CORDIAL. TOUTAH HAS GIVEN US COPY OF HIS LIST OR IRANIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS WHICH HE PASSED ON TO POURSAARTIP AT THAT MEETING. LIST CONTAINED 716 NAMES AND IS APPARENTLY VERY SIMILAR TO IRANIAN EMBASSY'S LIST. WE ARE POUCHING COPY TO ARN AND ALSO TO US MISSION GENEVA FOR DELIVERY TO HIAS REP SEIDENMAN.

5. COMMENT: WITHOUT MORE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM TEHRAN IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT POURSAARTIP WILL BE ADVANCING THIS MATTER MUCH FURTHER ON HIS OWN. MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WOMEN, JEWS, PASSPORTS, TRAVEL CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC01634
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780130-0658
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780333/aaaabbxr.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 503c1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 78 DAMASCUS 924
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3229379
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN JEWRY: IRANIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS
TAGS: PINT, SY, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/503c1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014